

Alabama Tourism Department

Request for Proposals

For United Kingdom In-Market Tourism Representative Services

June 12, 2015

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR UK IN-MARKET TOURISM REPRESENTATIVE SERVICES FOR ALABAMA
TOURISM DEPARTMENT**

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The State of Alabama is located in the southeastern area of the United States.

Tourism is a main economic generator for the State of Alabama. Studies have shown that overseas tourists stay longer and spend more money on trips than domestic tourists.

Alabama Welcome Center logs show the United Kingdom is a top overseas market to Alabama.

As a year-round vacation destination, Alabama offers an extensive list of attractions with a rich heritage of southern American culture.

The Alabama Tourism Department is seeking an in-market representation firm located in the United Kingdom to market Alabama as a tourism destination. The selected firm will be required to market Alabama in an aggressive and comprehensive manner to both strengthen awareness of Alabama as a tourism destination and increase tourism business to Alabama. The selected firm's primary responsibility will be the general United Kingdom and Ireland markets with secondary responsibilities in any European destination as directed by the Alabama Tourism Department as needed.

II. Scope of Work

In conjunction with, and at the direction of the Alabama Tourism Department, the successful vendor will plan and carry out programs and activities designed to increase awareness and tourism business to the State of Alabama.

Maintain a proactive, on-going relationship with appropriate tour and travel companies to increase tourism business to Alabama.

Target mainstream and niche tour operators, retail travel agents and consumers on an ongoing basis, selling the merits of Alabama to solicit new and incremental tourism business.

Plan and execute proactive public relations efforts to increase exposure to both consumers and trade of Alabama as a tourism destination.

Establish and maintain regular communications with Alabama industry partners – hotels, restaurants, etc.

Act as a local fulfillment center to provide Alabama tourism information to consumers in the United Kingdom by internet, mail and telephone.

Maintain or hire a call center with live operator(s) to answer telephone line(s) ALABAMA TOURISM. This number must be a local number for residences of London, England and available during normal London, England business hours and days.

Report weekly activities to the Alabama Tourism Department and prepare scheduled reports as needed on activity on behalf of Alabama Tourism Department.

Work with tour companies to educate their retail travel agents on the Alabama product.

Work with receptive companies to increase their Alabama product.

Organize familiarization trips for tour operators staff and journalists.. At least one familiarization group trip per year required and organized solo familiarization trips for tour operator product managers and journalists from UK and/or European countries as needed. Firm to accompany any group familiarization trip to Alabama when requested by Alabama Tourism Department.

Work with Alabama Tourism Department and their agents to review promotional marketing and advertising material as requested.

Attend both consumer and business tradeshow to represent Alabama Tourism Department. Shows and events to include but not limited to; IPW (formally POW WOW), WTM, ITB, Travel South International Showcase and Alabama Governors Conference on Tourism and at least 3 consumer shows in the United Kingdom.

Submit annual report listing Alabama Tourism Product with UK travel and tour companies.

Submit annual report of Alabama Hotels listed with major receptive companies.

Other responsibilities as designated by the Alabama Tourism Department.

III. Proposed Schedule

The Alabama Tourism Department will use the following timetable with the goal of selecting the most qualified proposer. This schedule may be changed solely at the Alabama Tourism Department's discretion:

RFP response due date:	July 1, 2015
Review and selection:	July 10, 2015
Agreement due to AL. Tourism Dept.	July 17, 2015

IV. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS

General

All prospective vendors shall provide sufficient information and data to fully allow a complete evaluation of the information presented. Information and data submitted by each applicant will become part of the proposal.

The vendor interested in responding to this RFP must provide the information on the firm's qualifications and experience, length of time in business, qualifications of the project team, project manager's experience, previous similar projects and references and approach to services. Submittals that do not respond completely to all requirements specified herein may be considered non-responsive and eliminated from the process.

Proposal Submittal Requirements

The following information sections will be required as part of the response to this RFP: The total of all responses should be a maximum length of 10 (ten) double spaced typed pages, not counting your cover page, table of contents, schedule A. Response should be in English in written form.

Two complete copies of your proposal should be submitted.

1. Vendor Information

1. Name of firm
2. Location of office or offices
3. Phone and email
4. Person(s) authorized to represent the firm in negotiations
5. Length of time in business
6. List of firm's clients
7. Is your firm registered with the Alabama Secretary of State to do business in Alabama.

2. Experience/Company

Describe your company's philosophy and what makes your firm unique or different.

- 3. Similar Work/Performance** Describe the vendor's experience as a tourism representation in the United Kingdom market for an attraction, city, county or state tourism entity in the State of Alabama or similar U.S. located destination. Vendor needs to demonstrate the success of increasing both the awareness and tourism business by providing past evidence.

4. Proposed Plan of Action

Demonstrate vendor's proposed plan to providing tourism representation services for the Alabama Tourism Department, demonstrating an understanding of the project scope of work and purpose. **Your proposed plan should match the costs amounts you list in Schedule A.**

1. Describe initial approach/philosophy to scope of work
2. Describe your firm's plan to increase awareness and business to Alabama
3. Describe the benefits the Alabama Tourism Department could expect should the vendor be awarded the agreement and the goals and measurements of performance to be used

5. Personnel/Resources

1. List and provide background/qualifications/hours of personnel assigned to this account and other resources available to support your plan of work to be performed, including number of hours per week and type of work.

Response for each assigned personnel shall include the following:

- A. Name of person
- B. Current Job Title
- C. Length of Employment with your organization. If this is to be a new hire to service the Alabama account, please indicate
- D. Primary Role to be played on the Alabama account
- E. Detail this individual's experience in the assigned role
- F. What percentage of this individual's time will be devoted to the Alabama account
- G. Number of hours per week this person will work on the Alabama account
- H. Does this individual service other accounts? If so please specify.

2. Will you employ outside contractors to execute your proposed score of work? If so please specify.

6. Cost and Budget Guidelines

The total budget for all items, including retainer, shall not exceed \$150,000 per year, for a total of \$300,000 during the two-year period.

Vendor shall submit cost for the entire contract on form listed as Schedule A .

Submittal Deadline and Instructions

The delivery of proposals to the Alabama Tourism Department prior to the specified date and time is solely and strictly the responsibility of the vendor. The Alabama Tourism Department shall not, under any circumstances, be responsible for delays caused by delivery service, or for delays caused by any other occurrence.

All responses must be manually and duly signed by an authorized corporate officer, principal or partner with the authority to bind said applicant.

The deadline for response to the RFP is Wednesday **July 1, 2015** . Responses should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked:

“PROPOSAL FOR UK TOURISM IN-MARKETING REPRESENTATION FOR THE ALABAMA TOURISM DEPARTMENT “

If proposal is sent by overnight courier such as FED EX, UPS

**Scott Burbank
Alabama Tourism Department
401 Adams Ave, Suite 126
Montgomery, AL 36104**

If return is by regular United States mail service,

**Scott Burbank
Alabama Tourism Department
P.O. Box 4927
Montgomery, AL 36103-4927**

Questions

All questions concerning this Request for Proposal should be address in writing to Scott Burbank, at scott.burbank@tourism.alabama.gov. Alabama Tourism Department is not responsible for emails not received, including those that might be quarantined by security software.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA AND RANKING PROCESS

General

The successful vendor must demonstrate an understanding of the project scope and purpose. This refers to the proposer's understanding of the needs that generated the RFP, of the objectives in asking for the services and to the nature and scope of the work involved.

All proposals will be evaluated with respect to the completeness of the data provided, support for all claims made and the overall approach taken. A maximum total of 100 points will be awarded as part of the evaluation based on the following:

Experience (maximum score 10)

- Demonstrated expertise in UK source market for providing service

Similar Work/Performance (maximum score 20)

- Demonstrated expertise providing similar scope of work

- Demonstrated expertise in Alabama destination market

Proposed Plan of Action (maximum score 30)

- Demonstrated expertise in initial approach and philosophy

- Demonstrated expertise in plan to increase Alabama tourism

- Demonstrated expertise in benefits, goals, measurements

Personnel/Resources (maximum score 20)

- Demonstrated expertise in vendor/staff assignments and hours required as noted in items 1 and 2 under this section

Cost (maximum score 20)

- Price reasonableness

- Value

All proposals will be evaluated a Selection Committee.

The evaluation of the proposals shall be accomplished taking into account the responding vendor's experience, proved performance with similar work, approach and plan of work, personnel to be assigned and proposed plan of cost.

Selection of a proposal shall not be binding upon the Alabama Tourism Department and may or may not, at the Alabama Tourism Department's sole discretion, result in the Alabama Tourism Department entering into a contract with the vendor.

The vendor certifies by submission of this proposal and resulting contract that the vendor has not publicly or privately colluded with any other vendor to fix prices or conditions of this contract.

Method of Selection

Selection will be based on the proposal that meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in the RFP. The selection process may, however, include a request for additional information or an oral presentation to support the written proposal.

The Alabama Tourism Department reserves the right to select other than the low-priced proposal if a higher-priced proposal provides the best value.

VI. CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS AND FINAL AGREEMENT

Given the short time from selection until estimated contract start, once a company is selected, the final agreement will need to be negotiated expeditiously.

VII. Term

The contract is for a period of two (2) years, starting October 1, 2015, or beginning date adjusted to date final approval is granted (based on yearly funding appropriations by the State of Alabama).

All contracts and renewals are dependent upon the provision of necessary appropriations by the Alabama Legislature and subject to approval by the Parties, the Contract Review Permanent Legislative Oversight Committee, and the Governor.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS**Entire Agreement**

Upon acceptance of vendor's proposal by the Alabama Tourism Department, the parties will execute a formal contract, in writing, duly signed by the proper parties thereto, and subject to review by the Legislative Contract Review Committee and approval of the Governor of the State of Alabama.

Reservations

The Alabama Tourism Department reserves the following rights: (1) to reject all proposals; (2) to reject individual proposals for failure to meet any requirement; (3) to award by item, part or portion of an item, group of items, or total; and (4) to waive minor defects. The Alabama Tourism Department may seek clarification of the proposal from vendor at any time and failure to respond is cause for rejection. Clarification is not an opportunity to change the proposal. Submission of a proposal confers on vendor no right of selection or to a subsequent contract. This process is for the benefit of the Alabama Tourism Department only and is to provide the Alabama Tourism Department with competitive information to assist in the selection process. All decisions on compliance, evaluation, terms, and conditions will be made solely at the discretion of the Alabama Tourism Department and made to favor the State.

Registered To Do Business In Alabama

Company will be required to register with the Alabama Secretary of State to do business in Alabama.

Cost of Preparation

The Alabama Tourism Department is not responsible for, and will not pay any costs associated with, the preparation and submission of vendor's proposal, regardless of whether or not selected.

Work Products

All work products originated or prepared by vendor and delivered to the Alabama Tourism Department pursuant to the RFP are, or will be, the exclusive property of the Alabama Tourism Department. The Alabama Tourism Department reserves the right to use for its benefit the ideas contained in proposals received.

Independent Contractor

The Vendor will be an independent contractor. Vendor, its agents, sub-Vendors, and/or employees will not be considered to be agent(s), distributor(s), representative(s), or employee(s) of the Alabama Tourism Department.

Payments

All invoices to be submitted and all payments to be issued in U.S. Dollars.

Location of Vendor's Office and Staff Assigned to Account

This RFP is for an In-Market Representative in the United Kingdom with duties in other locations. Vendor and staff must be located in the United Kingdom with staff ability assigned to account available to travel to the United States and locations as needed.

Schedule A

Name of Company Submitting RFP: _____

Submitted Cost for Services During a 12 month period. All amounts in U.S. Dollars.

Your proposed retainer amount.
This is the amount to cover all salaries
and administrative costs. To be paid quarterly.
Please list the quarterly amount and multiply
By 4 to list a year total.

\$ _____ x 4 = \$ _____
Quarterly Yearly

Your proposed amount for all travel.
This is the amount to cover airfare, hotel,
meals, registration and other costs associated
with attending tradeshow, sales calls
meetings, familiarization trips. These are
non-salary expense directly related
to these items. Trade shows expected,
ITB, IPW, Travel South International
Showcase, WTM, AL Gov. Conference.
Assume booth space to be paid by
Alabama tourism but not registration
or any other costs.

\$ _____
Yearly

Your proposed amount for public relations.
This amount to include cost of planning,
execution, and any costs of public relations
activities not contained in above retainer
or travel.

\$ _____
Yearly

Your proposed amount for tour operator
support, tour operator training expense,
and marketing costs. These are non-salary
expense directly related to these items.

\$ _____
Yearly

Your proposed amount for items not listed
above but necessary to carry out your proposed
plan

\$ _____
Yearly

Grand total for one year period

\$ _____
Yearly